NRCS

Natural Resources Conservation Service
Short Report for Cultural Resources Identification Survey

ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

Abstract: Archaeological subsurface test excavations were undertaken in a portion of the proposed NRCS-Nature Conservancy Mima Creek WRP project. These tests included scattered shovel tests and one meter by one meter units. No cultural materials were identified in any of the test units. NRCS recommendations of no adverse effects are based upon these results.

Report Title: Archaeological Test Excavation Results for the NRCS-Nature Conservancy Mima Creek WRP Project.

Author(s): Joseph Randolph

Report Date: 11.14.08

State: Washington **County:** Thurston
Project Cooperator: The Nature Conservancy

NRCS Program and Contract Year: WRP 2008

Legal Description and Location (Figure ***):

Cooperator	¼ Section	Section	Township	Range
Nature Conservancy	N½	20	16N	3W

USGS 7.5' Topographic Map(s) Showing Planned Undertakings (APE):
Rochester
Other Maps or Air Photos: None

Compliance Review: Conducted in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, and its implementing regulations.

Total Area Involved (Acres): 45

Description of Proposed Undertaking: The proposed undertaking includes mowing and herbicide treatment of the meadow and tree stands, tree and shrub planting, and scalping of canary reed grass to form shallow ponds. The latter scalping was the practice of concern that resulted in subsurface test excavation.

Survey Objective (Research Design): The survey objective was to determine whether any potential subsurface cultural resources would be impacted by the proposed project activities. Subsurface test excavations were determined necessary to answer this question. In addition to the surface survey, a determination was made that subsurface test excavations would be necessary. These subsurface tests were felt necessary after an initial field visit found that surface visibility was extremely limited, and future recommendations would be difficult without adequate surface visibility.

Number of Previously Unrecorded Cultural Resources Identified and Recorded: None

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

Previous Archeological Studies Within APE: Yes____ No X_

Archival Sources Checked: ([-] indicates a negative finding, [+] indicates positive finding with a short explanation, [ ] not consulted)

OAHP GIS Database	[-]
USGS Topographic Map	[-]
Soil Survey	[ ]
Air Photo	[-]
Project Cooperator Oral History	[-]
Other Oral History	[-]
GLO or other Plats	[ ]
Metsker's or other Historic Map	[ ]
Geologic Map	[ ]
Local History	[ ]
Other	[ ]

Archive or Depository Visited: ([-] indicates a negative finding, [+] indicates visit with a short explanation, [ ] not consulted)

OAHP	[-] Site database checked
Library	[ ]
Museum	[ ]
Historical Society	[ ]
Regional Depository	[ ]

Context Overview The project area has been utilized as a farm hayfield for a number of years. More recently, a short field airstrip has been constructed within the project area.

FIELDWORK: The subsurface test excavations included both shovel probes and more detailed 1m x 1m open units. The shovel tests were undertaken in two separate areas. The 1m x 1m test units were follow-ups in one of the shovel tested areas.

Total Area Examined and Methodology: The total area examined included less than one acre. This examination included two areas of shovel tests and one area of one meter by one meter (1mx1m) subsurface pits. The areas examined were those with potential subsurface impacts resulting from heavy equipment use.

Areas Not Examined and Reasons Why: Areas not examined were those with minimal or no potential mechanical ground disturbing activities.

Personnel Conducting or Assisting With Survey: Joseph Randolph, Monica Hoover

Date(s) of Survey: 4.23.08 and 7.31.08

Weather and Surface Visibility: Weather partly cloudy; surface visibility 20%.

RESULTS

Cultural Resources Identified and Description: The project area was being used as a hay field during the initial pedestrian survey and later during the test excavations. A historic grass covered landing strip bisected the test unit areas. No cultural materials were identified as a result of the subsurface test excavations. At least two fire cracked rocks were identified in one area during the initial shovel tests. Follow-up 1mx1m test excavations in this area allowed a determination that these FCR were part of a natural, broad, surface fire, probably not related to direct human activities. The itemized results follow:

Shovel test No 1: This test unit, and the area where it lies, is located on the edge of a shallow, water-filled depression immediately east of a developed road. This general area falls within an active hay field. The vertical sediment profile, following the natural stratigraphy, begins with an organic horizon which extends from the surface to 30 cm below the surface. Soils within this horizon were mixed hydric. Below this, the sediment was uniformly oxidized to the depth of 46cm. At the lowest depth water seepage was significant, causing a termination of the test. No cultural materials were noted in this shovel test.

Shovel Test 2: This test unit lies some distance southeast of the ST 1 location. The soil consisted of unmixed sandy loam from the surface to 48 cm below the surface. A fire cracked rock imbedded in charcoal was encountered at ca 30cm below the surface. Below this depth, infilling of the test unit with water was rapid, making visual evaluation and interpretation difficult.

Shovel Test 3: This unit was located near test unit 2. The soils at the surface began with unmixed silt loam from the surface to 20 cm below the surface. Below this, the sediment is iron stained to 48 cm where the excavation ended because of water inflow. No cultural materials were noted in this unit.

Shovel Test 4: This unit was located near test units 2 and 3. The sediments surrounding the dense grass vegetation was uniform sorted sandy/silt loam to a depth of 50 cm. Below this level, mottled iron staining was apparent. Water inflow rapidly filled the test unit at 65 cm below the surface. The test excavation ceased at this elevation. No cultural material was noted in this test unit.

Shovel Test 5: This unit was located near test units 2 through 4. The subsurface below dense grass organic growth was mixed hydric sediment to a depth of 30 cm. At this level a uniform layer of charcoal and burned sediment was encountered. Some of this charcoal occurred in fairly moderate size (1/2 inches in length). This test unit was excavated to a depth of 45 cm where rapid water infilling terminated the project. No cultural material was noted in this test unit

The 1m x 1m test unit excavations were undertaken a couple months after the shovel tests. The thought was that the sub-soils would have dried allowing an uninterrupted view of the sediments. Because of the recovery of a fire-cracked rock and charcoal at or within the same soil horizon and the potential they might be associated and/or might be a cultural phenomenon, the larger test units were placed near this shovel test area. Following is a summary of the results.

Test Unit One:

0-10cm bs (below surface): This is the organic horizon. Vegetation is dense, harvested grass. The sediment is mottled silty loam. The mottling is oxidized pea gravels. No cultural material was noted in this horizon.

10-20 cm bs: This is the B horizon. This is a mixed sediment plow zone. The sediment is silty loam with oxidized pea gravel. A few charcoal fragments were located in the eastern ½ of the excavation area.

20- 30 cm bs: The sediments stayed mixed silty loam until ca 23cm bs where a uniform oxidized layer of charcoal (burned branches) and burned sediment was encountered. A decision was made to end the excavation at this horizon, leaving the charred horizon in tact.

Test Unit Two:

0-12 cm bs: This layer contains the dense sod growing in a silt loam (0-5 cm). Below the sod, the sediment is mottled with oxidized pea gravel, and indication that this is within the plow zone.

12-20 cm bs: This is the B horizon. This is a mixed sediment zone. At the bottom of the 20cm horizon, the layer picks up small fragments of charcoal

20-32 cm.bs. : A mottled silty loam is consistent to 23 cm bs when a uniform charcoal and burned sediment lens extends from one side of the test unit to the other. The

excavation ended at this elevation to allow the burn layer to remain in tact. No cultural materials were noted in this test unit.

After a review of test unit matricies, it is hypothesized that the there are no buried subsurface cultural materials to report. Nor are there any cultural materials that would be adversely affected by the proposed project. The charcoal and burned sediment appear to be part of a larger, natural surface burn.

Project conclusions, Findings, and Recommendations:

No historic properties affected	[-]
Historic properties affected	[ ]
No adverse effect to historic properties	[ ]
Adverse effect to historic properties	[ ]

Location of Original Field Data and Other NRCS Documentation: Cultural review records temporarily housed with NRCS West Area Cultural Resource Specialist. Original field data and other documentation will ultimately be filed at Olympia Service Center, NRCS, 1835 Black Lake Blvd. SW, Suite E., Olympia, Washington.

ATTACHMENTS

Figures	[x]
Photographs	[x]
Other	[ ]

REFRENCES CITED: None

CERTIFICATION OF RESULTS: I certify as the NRCS 36CFR800 West Area Cultural Resources Specialist for Washington State, that I have reviewed, evaluated, and documented the methods and observations prepared here and that this report is accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Joseph Randolph — 11.18.08

Date

Cultural Resource Specialist, West Area
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service